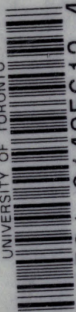


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G. W. E. RUSSELL

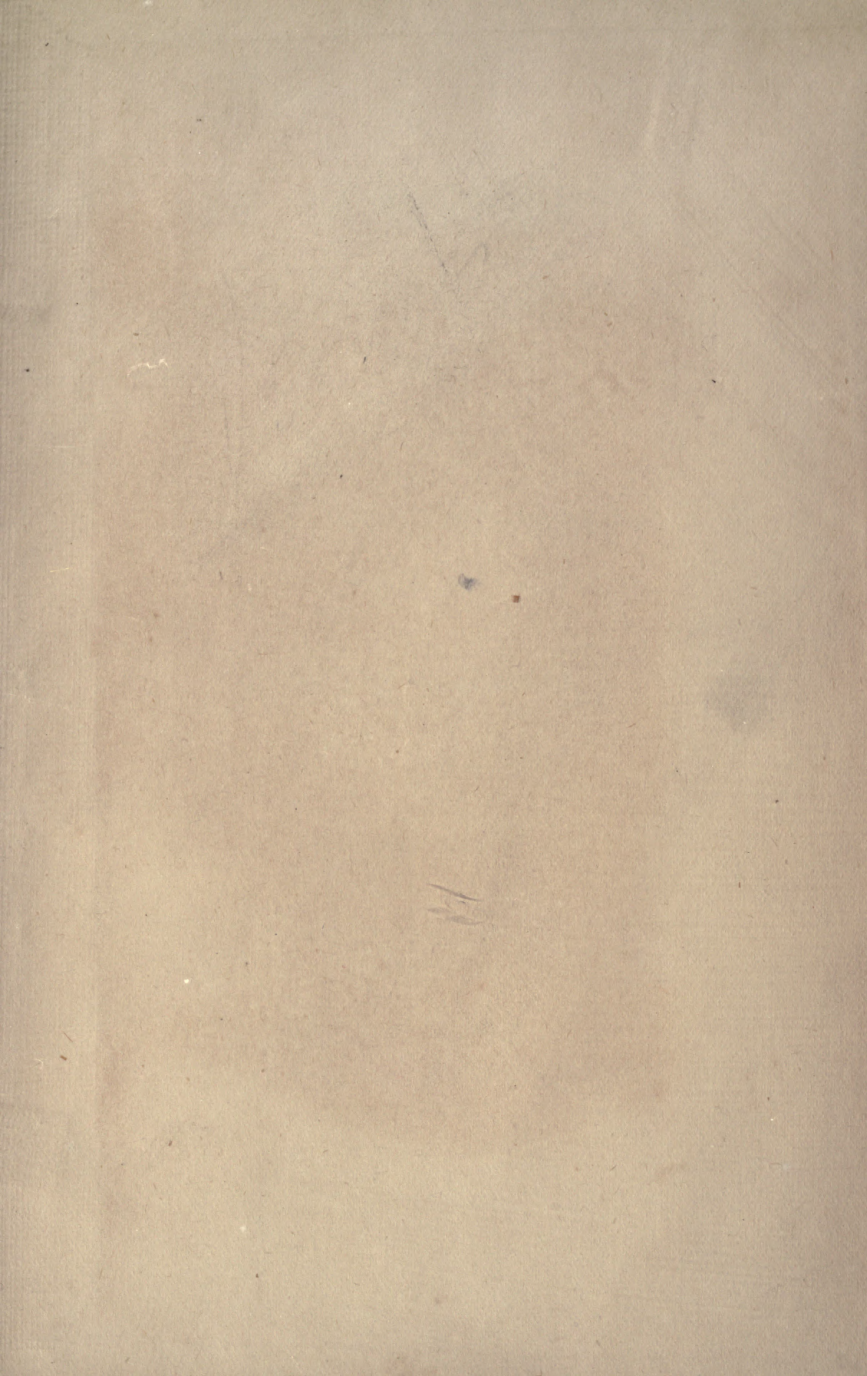
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MR. GLADSTONE'S
RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT:

A PAPER

READ IN CHRIST CHURCH

MAY 5, 1899

BY

GEORGE W. E. RUSSELL

Published by Request

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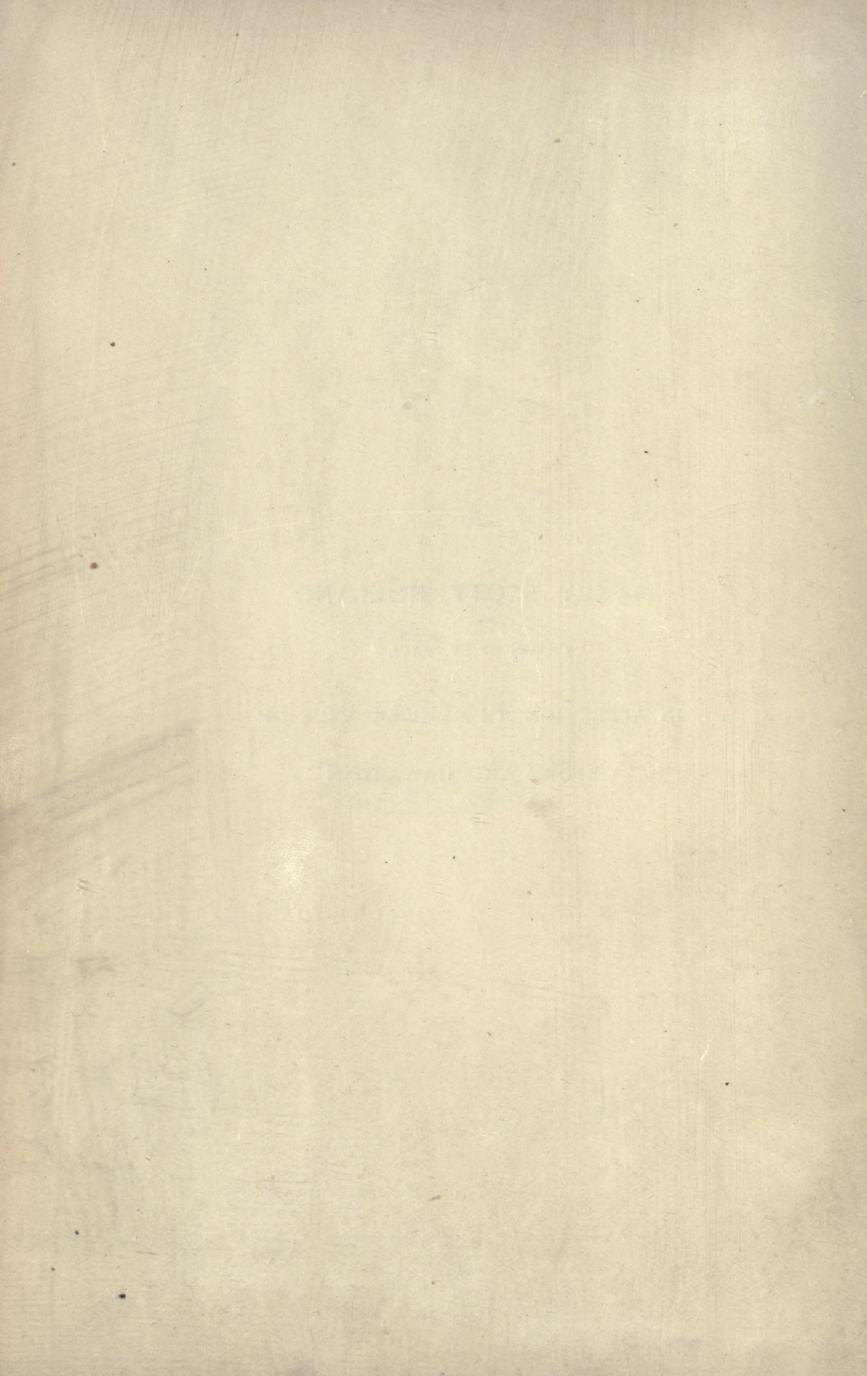
TO

HENRY SCOTT HOLLAND

CANON OF ST. PAULS

IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF

OXFORD AND HAWARDEN



THIS paper was written at the request of, and read before, the society *De Rebus Ecclesiasticis*. In several places I have borrowed from previous writings of my own; but this must be forgiven on the ground that, when words have been deliberately chosen, they seldom can be altered with advantage.

G. W. E. R.

Whitsuntide, 1899.

Μνημονεύετε τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν, οἵτινες ἐλάλησαν ὑμῖν τὸν
λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ· ὧν ἀναθεωροῦντες τὴν ἑκβασιν τῆς ἀναστροφῆς,
μιμείσθε τὴν πίστιν.—HEBREWS xiii. 7.

"Commending myself to the infinite mercies of God in the
Incarnate Son, as my only and sufficient hope."

From Mr. Gladstone's Will.

MR. GLADSTONE'S RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

HEREDITY has, I suppose, its bearing on religion, as on all human concerns. Mr. Gladstone was accustomed to declare that, so far as he knew, there was not a drop of blood in his veins which was not Scottish. His ancestry was Presbyterian; but his father, John Gladstone, leaving Scotland in early youth and settling at Liverpool, conformed to the Church of England, and became a munificent promoter of church-building and church-endowment. He was a God-fearing man of an old-fashioned type; not identified, as far as I can learn, with any party in the Church. But Mrs. Gladstone was a fervent Evangelical, of saintly character and personal charm; and it is, of course, to his mother that a boy generally owes his first impressions of religion.

In 1818 or 1819, Mrs. Gladstone said in a letter to a friend that she believed her son William had been "truly converted to God."¹ That is the Evangelical mode of expression. Probably it was not a case of *conversion*

¹ Communicated by J. Macdonald of 21, Thistle Street, Edinburgh.

from evil to good, but one of those thrice-happy instances where baptismal grace has not been forfeited by wilful sin, and where the spiritual life developes, as it were, by a natural growth. Tertullian tells us of *Anima naturaliter Christiana*.

At eleven, William Gladstone went to Eton. The Public Schools of England, even after seventy years of strenuous reform, leave a good deal to be desired in the way of faith and morals ; and what they were in the first quarter of the century we know from contemporary records. "Public Schools are the seats and nurseries of vice," was written in a religious diary ; and I have no reason to think that the judgment was too severe.

But the prevenient and restraining grace of God is stronger than environment, and William Gladstone came scatheless through the searching trials of school-life. "I remember him at Eton, a pure and noble boy," writes the venerable Canon Carter. "At Eton," said Bishop Hamilton of Salisbury, "I was a thoroughly idle boy ; but I was saved from some worse things by getting to know Gladstone." Sixty years afterwards a schoolfellow told me that he remembered seeing Gladstone turn his glass upside down, and decline to drink an indecent toast proposed at a school-dinner at the Christopher.

In October, 1828, William Ewart Gladstone became a member of the illustrious House in which I—*alia nutritus in umbra*—have the honour of paying this tribute to his memory.

The distinctly religious effect of Oxford on Mr. Gladstone's mind was less direct than has been commonly supposed. When he was an undergraduate the Catholic revival had not yet begun. Cardinal Newman taught us to date it from the 14th of July, 1833. With the exception of a handful of Evangelicals at St. Edmund's Hall, the religious clergy and laity of Oxford were High Churchmen of the traditional type. Dr. Routh still survived to "report," as Newman said, "to a forgetful generation what had been the theology of their fathers;" but his influence was not felt beyond the walls of Magdalen. The Caroline divinity still lingered. Men believed in the Church as a Divine society, as well as a chief institution of the realm; they set store upon her Orders and Sacraments, and at least professed great respect for, if they did not cultivate intimate acquaintance with, the writings of her standard divines. At the same time, they had a holy horror of Popish usurpation, and Sir Robert Peel's concession of the Roman Catholic claims had just cost him his seat for the University. But these influences produced no immediate or conscious effect on Mr. Gladstone's mind. The ecclesiastical atmosphere of the place was high and dry, and therefore as little as possible attractive to an ardent and spiritual nature. The fascinating genius and austere sanctity of Cardinal Newman had not yet begun to leaven the University. Between 1828 and 1832 there was no leader of paramount authority in the

religious world of Oxford, and the young Student of Christ Church was left to develop his own opinions and frame his own course. The blameless schoolboy became a blameless undergraduate; diligent, sober, regular alike in study and devotion, giving his whole energies to the duties of the place, and quietly abiding in the religious faith in which he had been trained. At the Union, when he opposed the removal of Jewish disabilities, he argued, as we are told by a contemporary, "on the part of the Evangelicals."

His life corresponded to his belief. He was conspicuously moderate in the use of wine. His good example in this respect affected, not only his contemporaries, but also his successors at the University. The present Archbishop of Canterbury, who followed him to Oxford ten years later, found it still operative, and declares that undergraduates drank less in the 'forties, because Gladstone had been courageously abstemious in the 'thirties. Bishop Charles Wordsworth said that no man of his standing in the University habitually read his Bible more or knew it better. Cardinal Manning described him to me as walking to church with his "Bible and Prayer-book tucked under his arm." He paid surreptitious visits to Dissenting chapels to hear celebrated preachers;¹ was enraged by a University sermon in which Calvin had been placed on the same level of orthodoxy as Socinus; and passed through

¹ See his "Gleanings of Past Years," vii. p. 231.

Oxford with a religious belief still untinged by Catholic theology. But the great change was not far distant, and he had already formed some of the friendships which, in their development, were destined to affect so profoundly the course of his religious thought.

During the Long Vacation of 1830, he joined a reading-party at Cuddesdon. One of his companions wrote in after years :—

“It is curious to remember seeing Manning hard at work getting up the text of the Bible, so as to command great facility in applying it, and *Gladstone working at Hooker.*”

In reading for the Schools, he became intimately acquainted with two great masters, who dominated all his subsequent thinking. “Butler and Aristotle would carry you anywhere in those days,” he said to me, in looking back over an interspace of more than sixty years.

At Christmas, 1831, he got his Double First, and now came the choice of a profession. Conscious of great powers, keenly anxious to use them for God's glory and the service of men, and (relieved by his father's wealth from the necessity of making his own fortune, he turned his thoughts to Holy Orders.) There still exists a deeply interesting letter in which he urges, with characteristic earnestness, the reasons which impelled him to that career. In old age Cardinal Manning

wrote: "He was nearer to being a clergyman than I was. He was, I believe, as fit for it as I was unfit."

But his father had resolved to make him a politician, and the paternal will prevailed.)

I do not pause to-night to speculate on might-have-beens; but I record the fact that, in after-life, Mr. Gladstone used to denounce, even with vehemence, that overweening exercise of the *Patria Potestas* which diverts a young man from the course on which his heart is set.

The last of the unreformed Parliaments was dissolved on the 3rd of December, 1832. Mr. Gladstone was returned for Newark, and took his seat in the House of Commons on the 29th of January, 1833.

A quotation from one of his early speeches throws a striking light on the life which he had lived at Oxford, and the kind of company that he had kept there. In a debate on a Bill to abolish subscription at matriculation, Lord Palmerston had expressed a reasonable dislike of a system which compelled the undergraduates to go "from wine to prayers, and prayers to wine." But Mr. Gladstone had a better opinion of the men who had so lately been his comrades. "He did not believe that *even in their most convivial moments they were unfit to enter the House of Prayer.*" Oxford produces few men, in any generation, to whom this would suggest itself as a possible vindication of compulsory Chapel.

The first act of the Whig Government in the reformed Parliament was an attempt to remodel the Irish

Church. A large part of its revenues was to be secularized; and ten Irish bishoprics were destroyed. Lord Grey told the English bishops to set their house in order. The process begun in Ireland might soon extend to England. Mr. Keble thought that the time had come when "scoundrels must be called scoundrels." On the 14th of July, 1833, he preached at St. Mary's his famous Assize Sermon on "National Apostasy," and immediately afterwards the issue of the "Tracts for the Times" began.

Cardinal Newman, organizing the crusade, and reckoning up his actual and possible allies, writes on the 2nd of October, 1833: "As to Gladstone, perhaps it would be wrong to ask a young man so to commit himself." But on the 13th of November he records: "The Duke of Newcastle has joined us . . . Gladstone, etc."

Interpreting these notes in the light of Mr. Gladstone's subsequent declarations, I should say that they do not imply any definite acceptance as yet of the doctrines specifically Tractarian. (They mean, I fancy, that the young Christian statesman eagerly responded to a call which bade him enlist in an army embattled against Liberalism and irreligion—in his view, synonymous terms.)

The "Tracts for the Times" soon saturated England with new influences. The passionate, almost despairing, appeal of half a dozen gifted and holy men at Oxford had awoke a response in every corner of the kingdom.

tractarian?

"We did," they said, "but light a beacon-fire on the summit of a lonely hill: and now we are amazed to find the firmament on every side red with the light of some responsive flame."

But it was not through the Tracts that the influence of the "Oxford Movement" or the "Catholic Revival" reached the young Member for Newark. It reached him through his friendship with James Robert Hope, Fellow of Merton, and afterwards Hope-Scott of Abbotsford. Of this eminent man Mr. Gladstone wrote in later years to his daughter, Mrs. Maxwell-Scott:—

"Few men, perhaps, have had a wider contact with their generation, or a more varied experience of personal friendships, than myself. Among the large number of estimable and remarkable people whom I have known, and who have now passed away, there is in my memory an inner circle, and within it are the forms of those who were marked off from the comparative crowd, even of the estimable and remarkable, by the peculiarity and privilege of their type. Of these very few—some four or five, I think, only—your father was one: and with regard to them it always seemed to me as if the type in each case was that of the individual exclusively, and as if there could be but one such person in our world at a time. After the early death of Arthur Hallam, I used to regard your father distinctly as at the head of all his contemporaries in the brightness and beauty of his gifts.

"We were at Eton at the same time, but he was

considerably my junior, so that we were not in the way of being drawn together. At Christ Church we were again contemporaries, but acquaintances only, scarcely friends.

* * * * *

"The next occasion on which I remember to have seen him was in his sitting-room at Chelsea Hospital.¹ There must, however, have been some shortly preceding contact, or I should not have gone there to visit him. I found him among folios and books of grave appearance. It must have been about the year 1836. He opened a conversation on the controversies which were then agitated in the Church of England, and which had Oxford for their centre. I do not think I had paid them much attention; but I was an ardent student of Dante, and likewise of Saint Augustine; both of them had acted powerfully upon my mind; and this was in truth the best preparation I had for anything like mental communion with a person of his elevation. He then told me that he had been seriously studying the controversy, and that in his opinion the Oxford authors were right. He spoke not only with seriousness, but with solemnity, as if this was for him a great epoch; not merely the adoption of a speculative opinion, but the reception of a profound and powerful religious impulse."²

Mr. Gladstone's mind and heart were already attuned to the new teaching and prepared to receive it, even though he "had not paid much attention" to the

¹ Of which his father was Governor.

² "Memoirs of J. R. Hopc-Scott," II. Appendix iii.

controversy. It was in 1836 that he wrote his hymn on the Holy Communion. Let me quote five verses.

Here, where Thine angels overhead
Do warn the Tempter's powers away,
And where the bodies of the dead
For life and resurrection stay ;
And many a generation's prayer
Hath perfumed and hath blest the air ;

O lead my blindness by the hand,
Lead me to Thy familiar Feast ;
Not here or now to understand,
Yet even here and now to taste,
How the eternal Word of Heaven
On earth in broken bread is given.

We, who this holy precinct round
In one adoring circle kneel,
May we in one intent be bound,
And one serene devotion feel ;
And grow around Thy sacred shrine
Like tendrils of the deathless Vine.

We, who with one blest Food are fed,
Into one body may we grow,
And one pure life from Thee, the Head,
Informing all the members flow ;
One pulse be felt in every vein,
One law of pleasure and of pain.

O let the virtue all divine,
The Gift of this true Sabbath morn,
Stored in my spirit's inner shrine
Be purely and be meekly borne ;
Be husbanded with thrifty care,
And sweetened and refreshed with prayer.

That conversation on the "controversies which had Oxford for their centre," and Hope's grave judgment that "the Oxford authors were right," set Mr. Gladstone on studying the question for himself. He went to work by a characteristically thorough yet simple method. He made a close examination of the Occasional Offices of the Prayer-book. "Those offices opened my eyes," he said sixty years later to Father Puller of Cowley.

From Bishop Phillpotts—"Harry of Exeter"—he learned that the opinions of the Reformers were nothing to us, and that for the authoritative interpretation of the Prayer-book we must go to the divines of 1662. His previous study of Hooker had prepared him for this change of view, and the process was completed by Sir William Palmer's *Treatise on the Church*—a book which Dr. Döllinger placed at the very top of English theological writing.

(From this process of independent examination) Mr. Gladstone emerged—what he remained to the end of his life—an English Catholic Churchman. (There was no break with his religious past. He was from first to last an Evangelical.) (But Catholic doctrine and practice were superimposed, so to say, on the Evangelical foundation.) This is curiously illustrated by a letter of the late Lord Houghton, who, describing in 1838 the bachelor-parties which he gives on Sunday evenings, says:—

"This unfortunately excludes the more severe members—*Gladstone*, etc. I really think, when people keep Friday as a fast, they might make a feast of Sunday."

The year 1838 saw the publication of Mr. Gladstone's first book, "The State in its Relations with the Church." He thus described its genesis :—

"The question of the relations of Church and State was forced into prominence at that time by a variety of causes, and among them not least by a series of lectures, which Dr. Chalmers delivered in Hanover Square Rooms, to distinguished audiences, with a profuse eloquence and a noble and almost irresistible fervour. These lectures drove me upon the hazardous enterprise of handling the same subject upon what I thought a sounder basis."¹

Hence came "The State in its Relations with the Church."

"The distinctive principle of the book was supposed to be that the State had a conscience."

"The one master-idea of the system, that the State as it then stood was capable in this age, as it had been in ages long gone by, of assuming beneficially a responsibility for the inculcation of a particular religion, carried me through all. My doctrine was, that the Church, as established by law, was to be maintained for its truth; that this was the only principle on which it could be properly

¹ "Memoirs of J. R. Hope-Scott," II. Appendix iii.

and permanently upheld ; that this principle, if good in England, was good also for Ireland ; that truth is of all possessions the most precious to the soul of man ; and that to remove, as I then erroneously thought we should remove, this priceless treasure from the view and the reach of the Irish people, would be meanly to purchase their momentary favour at the expense of their permanent interests, and would be a high offence against our own sacred obligations.”¹

The work was brought to a successful issue in the winter of 1838. Lord Houghton used to say that Sir Robert Peel, on receiving a copy as a gift from his young follower, exclaimed with truly official horror : “With such a career before him, why should he write books ?” But more emotional people took a very different view. Writing on the 13th of December, 1838, Baron Bunsen says :—

“Last night at eleven, when I came from the Duke, Gladstone’s book was lying on my table, having come out at seven o’clock. It is the book of the time, a great event—the first book since Burke that goes to the bottom of the vital question ; far above his party and his time. I sat up till after midnight, and this morning I continued until I had read the whole. . . . Gladstone is the first man in England as to intellectual power, and he has heard higher tones than any one else in this land.”

¹ “Gleanings,” vii. p. 108.

Writing a few days later to Dr. Arnold, the Baron again extols the book, and, while lamenting what he conceives to be its author's entanglement in Tractarian traditions, adds :

"His genius will soon free itself entirely, and fly towards Heaven with its own wings."

On the 9th of January, 1839, Cardinal Newman writes :—

"Gladstone's book, you see, is making a sensation."

On the 22nd, "The *Times* is again at poor Gladstone. Really I feel as if I could do anything for him. I have not read his book, but its consequences speak for it. Poor fellow ! it is so noble a thing."

(The book soon reached a third edition, and drew from Macaulay that trenchant review in which Mr. Gladstone was described, for the infinite gratification of later critics, as the "rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories.")

"The State in its Relations" is mainly a political book, in that higher sense of politics which is concerned with the nature, functions, and well-being of the State. But it contains some theological passages of great interest, notably those in which the writer criticizes the actual working, as distinct from the formal teaching, of the Church of Rome.

At Midsummer, 1840, Mr. Gladstone was one of the examiners for the Newcastle Scholarship at Eton. A

boy whom he examined wrote to me just fifty years later :—

“It was the golden time of ‘retrograding transcendentalism,’ as the hard heads called the Anglo-Catholic symphony. He seemed to me then an apostle of unworldly ardour, bridling his life.”

“He was the first *young good man* I had ever seen.”

Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone was busy with his second book, “Church Principles considered in their Results.” It attracted much less attention than “The State in its Relations”; but has, I think, more permanent value. It maintains the visibility and office of the Church, the mathematical certainty of the Apostolic Succession, and the nature and efficacy of the Sacraments. It defines the relations between Authority and Private Judgment, and vindicates the Church of England as the Divinely-appointed exponent of Christian truth for the people of this country. On St. Stephen's Day, 1840, Cardinal Newman wrote :—

“Gladstone's book is . . . *doctrinaire*, and (I think) somewhat self-confident ; but it will do good.”

Two days later, F. D. Maurice wrote this acute criticism :—

“His Aristotelianism is, it strikes me, more deeply fixed in him than before, and, on that account, I do not

see how he can ever enter enough into the feeling and truth of Rationalism to refute it."

Theory, in Mr. Gladstone, was never long divorced from practice, and his growing devotion to the Sacramental principle produced the following letter, written on the 24th of April, 1841, to a clergyman designated for the first incumbency of St. Thomas's Church, Liverpool, which his father had just built and endowed.

"There are some objects which I have much at heart, in connexion with this church, and which I venture to mention . . . They generally have reference to restoration of the rules of the Church, which have fallen more or less into desuetude ; which it may be difficult to re-establish against the contrary usage ; but to which the way seems open where the whole machinery is of new formation and no injurious precedents exist.

"The main one is the celebration of the Holy Communion weekly, as well as on the great festivals.

"This would of course bring with it the Weekly Offertory, and I trust the time is approaching when it will be practicable at least for many members of the church to make this the usual vehicle of their alms and religious contributions. . . . There is a difficulty connected with the weekly Communion in the extreme length of the service. It is usual, I think, to meet this by administering the Eucharist at eight o'clock in the morning. This practice has been dictated by the desire to avoid interference with the habits which members of congregations may have already formed. But it seems

clearly to invert the order, and mar the harmony, of the services of the Church. Our Morning Prayer comes in strangely at near mid-day ; most peculiarly to those who have already performed in the morning the consummating act of Christian worship.

* * * * *

“The greatest object of all appears to me to be the re-establishment of the Eucharist in its proper and Scriptural place as the central act of *at least* our weekly worship—where an easy opportunity is afforded by the opening of a new church.”

In this same year—1841—Mr. Gladstone became involved in that ill-starred scheme for planting at Jerusalem a Bishop who should rule both the English and the Lutheran clergy, which finally “broke” Cardinal Newman. It would appear that he gave his adherence to the scheme rather inadvertently, and under pressure from two prelates whom he greatly revered—Dr. Howley, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Dr. Blomfield, Bishop of London. He soon began to draw back.

On the 20th of November he writes to James Hope—

“I am ready individually to brave misconstruction for the sake of union with any Christian men, provided the terms of the union be not contrary to sound principle ; and perhaps in this respect might go further, at least in one of the possible directions, than you. But to declare the living constitution of a Christian Church

to be of secondary moment is of course in my view equivalent to a denial of a portion of the faith."

It is curious that, in the last conversation which I had with Mr. Gladstone before I visited his death-bed, he harked back to this ancient controversy about the Jerusalem Bishopric (*à propos* of Dr. Pusey's Life), and spoke with a good deal of bitterness, as if he had been misled and his action in the matter misrepresented.

I suppose that the maxim *Lex precandi, lex credendi*, applies to individuals as well as to Churches ; and this lends a peculiar interest to a Manual of Eucharistic Devotions which Mr. Gladstone compiled for his own use in 1842. It is drawn partly from ancient sources, chiefly Eastern ; partly from Andrewes, partly from Laud, partly from the Scottish Office, and is in part original. The whole is written with exquisite neatness in a booklet which could easily be carried in the waist-coat-pocket. After his death, Mrs. Gladstone allowed me to see this precious relic, and to make the following citations from it.

Before the Consecration.

"O Lord God :

We offer unto Thee the creatures of bread and wine. Make them to become the Body and Blood of Thy most dearly-beloved Son.

We offer unto Thee our bodies and our souls : make them to become body of the Body, and soul of the Soul, of Thy most dearly-beloved Son."

Before Communion.

"O my God, enable me to receive the Body of the Lord.

O awful Sacrament of the Body of the Lord.

O Lamb of God, before all things and above all things my delight :

Accept, for Thine own mercy's sake, this sacrifice which I offer—my soul and my body."

At Communion.

"Thou That wast Incarnate, and made Man :

That didst suffer so great pains :

Broken and Crucified :

Dead and Buried :

Returned from Hell :

Lifted up into Heaven :

Reigning in Glory :

To come unto Judgment :

Let mine unclean body be cleansed in Thee."

After Communion.

"O mighty power of the Death and Resurrection of the Lord, enter into my spirit and into my body and possess them, and make me live the life of the Lord, and from day to day to look for His most glorious appearing."

"Grant us to acquire continually
the increase of Thy likeness,
And through the gates of Death,
Through the abyss of darkness,
To enter into the Kingdom of GOD,

The bosom of everlasting rest.
 All this, O Heavenly FATHER,
 Through CHRIST alone,
 Through the shedding of His Blood,
 Through the Resurrection of His Body,
 I beseech with my whole heart,
 I the most miserable of sinners."

From the correspondence of the year 1845, I take a letter which beautifully illustrates the apostolic idea of Faith working by Love. To his friend James Hope he writes with reference to "temporal works" of mercy:—

"If you mean temporal works otherwise than in money, I would to God we could join hands upon a subject of the kind which interested you much two years ago.

"The desire we then both felt passed off, as far as I am concerned, into a plan of asking only a donation and subscription. Now it is very difficult to satisfy the demands of duty to the poor by money alone. On the other hand, it is extremely hard for me (and I suppose possibly for you) to give them much in the shape of time and thought, for both with me are already tasked up to and beyond their powers, and by matters which I cannot displace. I much wish we could execute some plan which, without demanding much time, would entail the discharge of some humble and humbling offices."

What those "humble and humbling offices" were was explained by the present Bishop of St. Andrews

(who had ministered to Mr. Gladstone on his death-bed) when he preached his funeral sermon on the 22nd of May, 1898.

“On this day I think of one who, last Thursday, on that bright Ascension morning, passed out of the toil and pain of this suffering life into the rest for which he was pleading. . . . I like to think of him when a boy at Eton, with hard discipline training himself so that he should never allow his eyes to look at anything that was evil, nor his mind to dwell upon anything that was not pure and lovely and of good report. I like to think of him in his young manhood on that day when in the presence of only one intimate friend he solemnly made up his mind that whatever else he accomplished in life, whether he was successful or whether he failed, he would by God's help not rest unless he was able to bring back from the dreary wilderness of sin some of those poor women whose lives have been ruined by man's selfishness, man's thoughtless cruelty. I like to see him like the young knight in the ancient legend girding on his armour for that lifelong effort.”

At Christmas, 1845, Mr. Gladstone re-entered the Cabinet after a year's retirement from office, and wrote to Cardinal Manning, then Archdeacon of Chichester, who had sent him a volume of sermons, a most interesting letter, in which he describes his rule of life; the amount of time which he bestows, daily and weekly, on devotion; his practice as to fasting; and the amount of sleep which he allows himself.

"My needs for sleep are great: as long as I rise feeling like a stone, I do not think there is too much, and this is the general description of my waking sense, in office and during the session; but I consider seven and a half hours the least I ought then to have, and I should be better with eight. I know the old stories about retrenching sleep, and how people are deceived themselves: with me it may be so, but I think it is not. . . . I hope I may be preserved from the guilt and ingratitude of indulging sensual sloth, under the mask of wise and necessary precautions."¹

To this year—1845—belongs a letter, important as bearing on an event which still lay twenty-four years ahead—the Disestablishment of the Irish Church. Evidently the optimistic theory of that Establishment which had been set forth in "*The State in its Relations*," was beginning to give way. On the 16th of August he wrote to Bishop Wilberforce:—

"I am sorry to express my apprehension that the Irish Church is not in a large sense efficient; the working results of the last ten years have disappointed me. It may be answered, 'Have faith in the ordinance of God'; but then I must see the seal and signature, and these how can I separate from ecclesiastical descent? The title, in short, is questioned, and vehemently, not only by the Radicalism of the day, but by the Roman Bishops, who claim to hold the succession of St. Patrick, and this claim has been alive all along from the Reformation, so that lapse of years does nothing against it."

¹ "*Life of Cardinal Manning*," I. p. 436.

Anticipating for a moment, I would say that this declaration should be read in connexion with the Letter on the Functions of Laymen in the Church, which, in 1851, Mr. Gladstone addressed to Dr. Skinner, Bishop of Aberdeen and Primus.¹

That letter is remarkable because, as was detected at the time by Dr. Charles Wordsworth, Bishop of St. Andrews, "it contained the germ of Liberation, and the political equality of all religions." The Bishop published a controversial reply, which drew from Dean Gaisford these ominous words: "You have proved to my satisfaction that this gentleman is unfit to represent the University."

Those were days of spiritual stress and conflict. The period from 1845 to 1858 was rightly christened by Dr. Liddon "The Struggle." The first principles of Catholic truth were struggling to live in the Church of England, and were beset by all imaginable forms of difficulty and danger. In 1850 the Gorham Judgment seemed to jeopardize the orthodoxy of the Church in respect of Holy Baptism, and the supremacy of the Privy Council was felt to be an intolerable burden. Mr. Gladstone, whose two most intimate friends—James Hope and Henry Manning—were now on the verge of secession, was profoundly moved. He liberated his soul in an Open Letter to the Bishop of London. This letter sought to prove that, as settled at the Reformation, the Royal Supremacy was not inconsistent with the

¹ "Gleanings," vi. p. 1.

spiritual life and inherent jurisdiction of the Church, but that the recent establishment of the Privy Council as the ultimate court of appeal in religious causes was "an injurious, and even dangerous, departure from the Reformation Settlement."

After urging, with impassioned earnestness, the claim of the Church to be the final judge in all questions of doctrine, and contemplating the possibility that the State may formally reject this claim, he says:—

"We should, indeed, have a consolation, the greatest perhaps which times of heavy trouble and affliction can afford, in the reduction of the whole matter to a short, clear, and simple issue; because such a resolution, when once unequivocally made clear by acts, would sum up the whole case before the Church to the effect of these words: 'You have our decision; take your own; choose between the mess of pottage, and the birthright of the Bride of Christ.' Those that are awake might hardly require a voice of such appalling clearness; those that sleep, it surely would awaken; of those that would not hear it must be said, 'Neither would they hear, though one arose from the dead.'

"But She that, a stranger and a pilgrim in this world, is wedded to the Lord, and lives only in the hope of His Coming, would know her part; and while going forth to her work with steady step and bounding heart, would look back with deep compassion upon the region she had quitted—upon the slumbering millions, no less blind to the Future than ungrateful to the Past."¹

¹ "Gleanings," v. p. 287.

Hardly had the scandal and commotion caused by an attack on the doctrine of Holy Baptism died out, when an attack on the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist was begun. Archdeacon Denison was prosecuted for teaching the Real Objective Presence. On the 13th of August, 1856, Mr. Gladstone wrote to a friend:—

“Dr. Lushington has declared the intention of the Court to condemn George Denison, not only as to some secondary expressions or shades of his doctrine, which may be thought to belong to him individually, but likewise as to his profession of those principles which imply belief in the Eucharist as a substantive Reality. I use the expression advisedly, for the Eucharist, in the character of a touching spectacle and emblem, requires no *belief* and admits of none. My mind is quite made up, that if belief in the Eucharist as a Reality is proscribed by law in the Church of England, all I hold dear in life shall be given and devoted to over-setting and tearing in pieces such law, whatever consequences, of whatever kind, may follow.”

On the 23rd of August he writes to Bishop Wilberforce:—

“It is high time that there should be a careful argument upon the justice and morality of late ecclesiastical proceedings; that the Archbishop should be awakened out of his fool's paradise, and made to understand that, though reverence for his office has up to this time, in a wonderful manner, kept people silent about

his proceedings, yet the time has come when a beginning must be made towards describing them without circumlocution in their true colours ; and it must likewise be shown how judicial proceedings are governed by extrajudicial considerations, and a system is growing up under which ecclesiastical judges are becoming the virtual legislators of the Church, while its legislature is silent."

The need for devising some method by which the mind of the Church of England, as distinct from the State, could be ascertained and declared, seems to have pressed on Mr. Gladstone with an almost insupportable weight. On the 2nd of November, 1857, he wrote to Bishop Wilberforce :—

"If the mind of those who rule and of those who compose the Church is deliberately anti-Catholic, I have no right to seek a hiding-place within the pale of her possessions by keeping her in a condition of voicelessness."

I have no right to seek a hiding-place within the pale of her possessions.

What was at the back of Mr. Gladstone's mind when he wrote those words ? For my own part, I feel certain that it was not secession to Rome. In 1873 he wrote to Mrs. Maxwell-Scott about the secession of her father, James Hope, in the following terms :—

"Our friendship continued to live, but only, or

almost only, as it lives between those who inhabit separate worlds. On no day since that date, I think, was he absent from my thoughts; and now I can scarcely tear myself from the fascination of writing about him. And so, too, you will feel the fascination of reading about him; and it will serve to relieve the weariness with which otherwise you would have toiled through so long a letter. . . . If anything which it contains has hurt you, recollect the chasm which separates our points of view; recollect that what came to him as light and blessing and emancipation, had never offered itself to me otherwise than as a temptation and a sin; recollect that when he found what he held his 'pearl of great price,' his discovery was to me beyond what I could describe, not only a shock and a grief, but a danger too."¹

A temptation and a sin. The conviction which had withstood that temptation and avoided that sin in the dark days of 1845, when Cardinal Newman "drew after him a third part of the stars of Heaven," and in the even darker days of 1851, when, in the secessions of Hope and Manning, Mr. Gladstone "felt as if he had lost his two eyes," was not likely to be reversed merely because the Bishops were misbehaving themselves in 1857. In old age Mr. Gladstone said to me: "I am the strongest anti-papalist in the world. The Papacy is a tyranny all through—a tyranny of the Pope over the Bishops, of the Bishops over the Priesthood, of the

¹ "Memoirs of J. R. Hope-Scott," II. Appendix iii.

Priesthood over the Laity." And the Temporal Power he always regarded as a kind of Antichrist.

No, I am persuaded that it was not to Rome that Mr. Gladstone looked for a refuge if the Church of England failed him. We know from Cardinal Manning's Life that in 1850 some distressed Churchmen contemplated the plan of setting up a separate church, which should maintain its Orders, Sacraments, and doctrine in independence alike of the State and of Rome. Possibly Mr. Gladstone favoured this scheme. The passage which I quoted from his letter to Bishop Blomfield looks like it. But, on the whole, I am inclined to think that, if he had been driven out of the Church of England, he would have transferred his allegiance to the Episcopal Church of Scotland, to which his father and family had conformed when they made their home in Kincardineshire, and of which he had himself been an active promoter and benefactor. (One¹ of my hearers to-night knows what he did for Trinity College, Glenalmond.) Happily, however, the necessity for a change never arose. By 1860 "The Struggle" was ended. Catholic principles of faith and practice had made good their foothold in the Church of England, and Mr. Gladstone's increasing ascendancy in political life was really, though "not with observation," working towards the full development and triumph of the movement which had issued from Oxford in 1833.

¹ Dr. Bright.

At this point I may lay aside the chronological method which I have pursued while I was tracing the growth and formation of Mr. Gladstone's religious opinions. The growth is now ended. The formation is complete. I turn to his recorded judgments on crucial points of Catholic theology, and I ask you to note the wonderful consistency of thought, and often of phrase, in a series of extracts ranging from 1838 to 1897.

THE INCARNATION.

(1893) "All I write, and all I think, and all I hope, is based upon the Divinity of Our Lord—the one central hope of our poor, wayward race."¹

(1894) "The Incarnation brought righteousness out of the region of cold abstractions, clothed it in flesh and blood, opened for it the shortest and the broadest way to all our sympathies, gave it the firmest command over the springs of human action, by incorporating it in a Person, and making it, as has been beautifully said, liable to love."²

(1872) "You will hear much to the effect that the divisions among Christians render it impossible to say what Christianity is, and so destroy the certainty of Religion. But if the divisions among Christians are remarkable, not less so is their unity in the greatest doctrines that they hold. Well-nigh fifteen hundred years—years of a more sustained activity than the world had ever before seen—have passed away since the great

¹ Letter to a young man at Denver, Colorado.

² "Later Gleanings," p. 331.

controversies concerning the Deity and the Person of the Redeemer were, after a long agony, determined. As before that time, in a manner less defined but adequate for its day, so ever since that time, amid all chance and change, more—ay, many more—than ninety-nine in every hundred Christians have with one will confessed the Deity and Incarnation of Our Lord as the cardinal and central truths of our religion. Surely there is some comfort here, some sense of brotherhood, some glory in the past, some hope for the times that are to come.”¹

(1894) “There are, it may be, upon earth four hundred and fifty millions of professing Christians. There is no longer one fold under one visible shepherd, and the majority of Christians is content with its one Shepherd in Heaven, and with the other provisions He has made on earth. His flock is broken up into scores, it may be hundreds, of sections. But they all profess the Gospel; and what is the Gospel? . . . The reply is still the same as it was in the Apostolic age: the central truth of the Gospel lies in the Trinity and the Incarnation—in the God That made us, and the Saviour That redeemed us. When I consider what human nature and human history have been, and how feeble is the spirit in its warfare with the flesh, I bow my head in amazement before this mighty moral miracle—this marvellous concurrence evolved from the very heart of discord.”²

¹ Address to the Students of Liverpool College.

² “Later Gleanings,” p. 299.

THE NICENE CREED.

(1896) "The Creed elaborated at Nice and Constanti-
nople represents, even more than any other document, the
prolonged, concentrated, and most severely-tested action
of the mind of the Universal Church. In the last of
these particulars it stands alone. It was through the
agonies of the fourth century—the hardest of all the
trials, the noblest of all the victories, of the Church of
God—that this Creed made its way to a position un-
rivalled alike in loftiness and in solidity. In the East
it may be said to enjoy an exclusive dominance. In
the West, through the Eucharistic Office, it holds the
grandest of all positions in Christian worship."¹

REUNION OF CHRISTENDOM.

(1843 ; republished 1879) "God forbid that, by our
asperity and rancour, or by our narrowness and exclu-
siveness, by our obtruding matters of opinion into the
region sacred to matters of faith, by our setting up
standards of orthodoxy more extended or more rigid
than those which God has commanded to be used as
such, the auspicious day should be averted or postponed,
in which the children of all Christian Churches should
kneel around a common altar, and, receiving from the
same hands the Pledges of Salvation, should again be
one, even as they of old were one, and as He, with
Whom in all things they seek to be identified, would
have them to be one for ever."²

¹ "Studies Subsidiary to Bishop Butler," p. 229.

² "Gleanings," v. p. 54.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

(1878) "No doubt (as I for one believe) the Church began with a clergy; nay, began in a clergy. It had its centre of life, and of self-propagating power, in the Apostolic College, which gradually called into being those other orders that form the full equipment of the Christian Ministry."¹

THE APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

(1840) "The Bishop conveys the power of administering Sacraments, whereby the Church is constantly replenished with children; of ordaining Priests, by whom Sacraments are administered; and of consecrating Bishops, by whom in turn these powers may be communicated anew to others, who may replace the actual holders, and hand them on from one generation to another. In this line, therefore, alone it is that the effectual principle of continued propagation is carried down from the Apostles of Christ to the latest age."²

PAPAL SUPREMACY.

(1878) "We are often told it was necessary that there should be an ecclesiastical organization with one head exercising supremacy over the entire body. But when we look through or over the wall of the Western Church into the precincts of the Eastern, we seem to find a living confutation of this argument. For there a vast body, nearly a fourth of Christendom, has subsisted from the great Day of Pentecost to our day, which not

¹ "Gleanings," iii. p. 262.

² "Church Principles," p. 274.

only does not enjoy, but which renounces and condemns the whole doctrine of Supremacy; and which, under the old patriarchal constitution of the Church, retains the Christian faith entire by the acknowledgment of Rome herself, which invites, and invites in vain, to her Councils those unyielding Patriarchs of the East. . . . The score of millions of those Christians who inhabit the Turkish Empire have for almost a corresponding tale of generations enjoyed the highest of all honours: they have been sufferers for their faith. They have been its martyrs and its confessors. . . . Ever since the Turkish hoof began to lay waste the Levant, these twenty millions have had before them, on the one side, peace and freedom—on the other side, the Gospel. They have chosen the Gospel, and have paid the forfeit.”¹

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

(1838) “In England . . . the course of events was widely different (from that on the Continent). Her Reformation, through the Providence of God, succeeded in maintaining the Unity and Continuity of the Church in her Apostolical Ministry. We have, therefore, still among us the ordained hereditary witnesses of the truth, conveying it to us through an unbroken series, from our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles. This is to us the ordinary voice of Authority; of authority equally reasonable and equally true, whether we will hear or whether we will forbear; of authority which does not supersede either the exercise of private judgment, or the sense of the Church at large, or the supremacy of

¹ “Gleanings,” iii. p. 257.

Scripture ; but assists the first, locally applies the second, and publicly witnesses to the last."¹

(1840) "She (the Church of England) gives credibility to her doctrine, and clear authority to her ministrations, by the fact that she teaches no articles of faith but such as have been drawn out of Scripture by the universal consent of the Church from the beginning, and that she is to this day historically the same institution through which the Gospel was originally preached to the English Nation—preached then, as it is preached now, by the ascertained commission of the Apostles of Christ, and through them by the Will of Christ Himself."²

(1895) "The Church of England, I am persuaded, will do nothing, in regard to faith and discipline, to compromise or impair her character as the Catholic and Apostolic Church of this country."³

(1895) "It will surprise you to learn my belief that I was born, and have always lived, in the Catholic Church of this country, founded long before St. Augustine extended it ; and that by leaving it I should commit an act of rashness and a great sin."⁴

THE VALIDITY OF ANGLICAN ORDERS.

(1896) "For the clergy of the Anglican Communion, numbering between thirty thousand and forty thousand, and for their flocks, the whole subject is one of settled solidity."⁵

¹ "The State in its Relations," II. p. 95.

² "Church Principles," p. 313.

³ From the Scheme of St. Deiniol's Library.

⁴ Letter to Rev. Father Tagliabue.

⁵ "Later Gleanings," p. 384.

THE BETTER WAY.

(1897) "We cannot be content with mutilated Sacraments, with an imprisoned Bible, with Aristotelian metaphysics exalted into definitions of faith, with the transfer to any human tribunal of an allegiance due to God alone."¹

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

(1845) "The Church in which our lot has been cast has come to the birth, and the question is, Will she have strength to bring forth? I am persuaded it is written in God's decrees that she shall; and that, after deep repentance and deep suffering, a high and peculiar part remains for her in healing the wounds of Christendom."²

(1850) "It is nearly sixty years since thus a stranger and an alien (De Maistre), a stickler to the extremest point for the prerogatives of his Church, and nursed in every prepossession against ours, though he could then only see her in the lethargy of her organization, and the dull twilight of her learning, could nevertheless discern that there was a special work written of God for her in Heaven, and that she was VERY PRECIOUS to the Christian world. . . . What a word of hope and encouragement to every one who, as convinced in his heart of the glory of her providential mission, shall unshrinkingly devote himself to defending within her borders the full and whole doctrine of the Cross, with that mystic symbol now as ever gleaming down on him from Heaven,

¹ "Later Gleanings," p. 406.

² "Memoirs of J. R. Hope-Scott," II. p. 77.

now as ever showing forth its inscription—*In hoc signo vinces.*"¹

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

(1879) "That personal and experimental life of the human soul with God, which profits by all ordinances, but is tied to none, dwelling ever, through all its varying moods, in the inner court of the Sanctuary whereof the walls are not built with hands."²

THE TWO GREAT SACRAMENTS.

(1840) "There is indeed an important verbal question which may be raised on the meaning of the word *Sacrament*, which appears to exhibit considerable diversity of sense. . . . Under the term *Sacrament*, I deal only with those two Institutions which our Church declares to be generally necessary to salvation."³

"Undoubtedly we should reckon as the highest and main use of Sacraments their office of specially and peculiarly imparting to us the participation of the Divine Nature."⁴

"And so taught the ancient Church. Her idea was of an intrinsic virtue, residing by Divine appointment in the Sacraments, but capable of being intercepted in that passage to the soul of man by his unfaithfulness and insincerity."⁵

HOLY BAPTISM.

(1840) "A spiritual power and operation belong to Baptism."⁶

¹ "Gleanings," v. p. 289.

³ "Church Principles," p. 164.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 163.

² "Gleanings," vii. p. 223.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 176.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 160.

"The exercise of a spiritual power, whose office it specifically is to impart a principle of spiritual life."¹

THE HOLY COMMUNION.

(1840) "As regards the Holy Communion, our Church teaches a similar doctrine. She does not feel that the solemn words of the Institution of the Eucharist are adequately, that is Scripturally, represented by any explanation which resolves them into mere figure. . . . She believes that there is a real, though not a carnal, truth in the solemn words, THIS IS MY BODY, and THIS IS MY BLOOD; in just conformity with the precept in which St. Paul desires us to discern, that is discriminate from common elements, the Body and Blood of the Lord. . . . Here, therefore, is also comprised the idea of a spiritual power feeding that new life, which we have in the Church or body of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, and which was first given us at our Baptism, when we became by covenant, whether for good or evil, members of that Church or body."²

"The word preached is mingled with human imperfection; whereas That which is received in the Sacrament is wholly Divine."³

On this point I must pause for a moment. I have never known any one, priest or layman, who had a more profound or more childlike faith in the Reality of the Most Blessed Presence under the forms of Bread and Wine. The Real Objective Presence, depending on the

¹ *Ibid.* p. 161.

² *Ibid.* p. 161.

³ *Ibid.* p. 171.

Lord's act in Consecration, independent of the receiver and prior to the act of Communion—this characteristic truth of Catholic theology was held and taught by Mr. Gladstone with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength.

And his practice conformed with his belief. He never missed an opportunity of Communion. During a Mission at Hawarden, after he had turned seventy, he climbed up to church in the cold and darkness of a January morning, in order to communicate with his pitmen at a 4 o'clock Celebration. To see him at Communion was to have an object-lesson in adoring worship. He was, visibly and unmistakably, *solus cum Solo*. The Bishop of St. Andrews has thus described him as he appeared in St. Peter's Church, Windmill Street, on Sunday, the 6th of December, 1868, when the Queen had just commanded him to form his first administration.

"I remember him coming, as he always did on every emergency, great or small, to receive the Life of Christ at the Holy Table. I see him now kneeling there. The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ had been received. His soul was feeding spiritually on that Body and Blood. Communicants went up and came back, but he remained absorbed evidently in communion with his Saviour. He was there till the end of the service. He had lost all thought of man. . . .

"He had no sympathy either with that flippant irreverence with which nowadays so many crowd to the holy altar of our God. It was to him a very solemn

thing to receive the Holy Communion. Shall I ever forget the Friday in Passion Week, when I gave him the last Holy Communion that I was allowed to administer to him? It was early in the morning. He was obliged to be in his bed, and he was ordered to remain there, but the time had come for the confession of sin and the receiving of absolution. Out from his bed he came. Alone he knelt in the presence of his God till the absolution had been spoken, and the Sacred Elements had been received. 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!'—that was the keynote of his life. May the Lord bless him and keep him. May the Lord make His face to shine upon him, and be gracious to him. May the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon him, and give him joy never-ending in that quiet home of the redeemed. 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: even so saith the Spirit.'"

In 1875, Mr. Gladstone wrote, with reference to controversies then current, a passage which applies with singular force to the events of the present hour.

"Unhappily, men of no small account announce that they care not for the sign, but must deal with the Thing Signified. They desire the negation by authority of the doctrine of the Real Presence of our Lord and Saviour Christ, and of the Eucharistic Sacrifice; negations which, again, are synonymous with the disruption of the English Church. . . . There are even those in the English Church who urge with sincerity, and without being questioned by authority, the duty of preaching the 'Real Absence'; and, though these be few, yet some

who shrink from the word may be nearly with them in the thing. On the other side . . . there are multitudes of men who can patiently endure differences which they believe to be provisional, and adjourn their settlement to a future day ; but who believe that the lowering of the Sacramental doctrine of the English Church in any of its parts will involve, together with a real mutilation of Scriptural and Catholic truth, a loss of her Christian dignity and a forfeiture of all the hopes associated with her special position in Christendom. Of all Sacramental doctrine none is so tender in this respect as that which relates to the Eucharist. The gross abuses of practice, and the fanciful excesses of theological speculation in the Western Church before the Reformation, compelled the Anglican Reformers to retrench their statements to a minimum which can bear no reduction.”¹

THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE.

(1878) “If it be true that, in the current doctrine and practice of the Eucharist, the Sacrificial idea had, before the Reformation, and not for the best purposes, been allowed to assume an undue and enormous predominance over that of Communion, it came in the course of controversy to be so depressed on the Protestant side that it was almost effaced from the common mind. This could hardly be done without a serious dislocation of the historical relations between that great Sacrament and its historic types. Nor again without seriously lowering the general conception of life and worship as a true sacrifice to God, which had the Eucharistic Sacrifice for its central point.”²

¹ “Gleanings,” vi. p. 172.

² “Gleanings,” iii. p. 235.

THE POWER OF THE KEYS.

(1840) "Now let us suppose such a mind . . . seeking advice and counsel from a minister of God, it may be upon the bed of agony or in the very grasp of death. . . . He who has come to supply its need is able to say, in addition to the ostensible goodness and comfort of his assurances, 'That which I say is said under an awful responsibility. I who speak have been commissioned to carry a message from God to man, the message of the Gospel of Christ. His commission came to me by no mere fancy or conclusion of my own, but from the hands of those to whom He, in the flesh, seen by their eyes, heard by their ears, handled by their hands, entrusted it, to be delivered down in perpetual descent. So not the wit or will of man, but He, the Holy One, has given me the power and the charge to minister to your soul, at the most awful peril of my own.'"¹

This last quotation leads me to say a word about Mr. Gladstone's views concerning Confession and Absolution.

Here certainly what have been called his "Anglican limitations" are very visible. He believed, of course, in the reality of the absolving power as part of the ministerial commission. He felt strongly about the obligation which binds English priests to *move* sick persons to make their Confession. And I imagine—though of course I do not know—that on his own death-bed he made his Confession to the Bishop of

¹ "Church Principles," p. 271.

St. Andrews. But with regard to habitual Confession, he seems to have been more alive to its perils than to its advantages. The word "peril" may be unduly strong, but nothing is more conspicuous in his writings on the grave subject of repentance than his apprehension lest spiritual laziness should lead people to substitute a merely mechanical process for the saving realities of heart-searching and self-abasement before the All-seeing Judge.

In 1838 he wrote as follows about what he conceived to be the actual system of Rome:—

"The tide of sin flows back upon us the moment it has been repelled, and to be delivered from its flood, to be washed from day to day, to have our justification renewed and restored by the perpetual cleansing of the Blood of Our Lord—this is the very pre-condition of all acceptable and Christian service. Yet even here the Roman arts have infused a poison. St. Augustine calls the Lord's Prayer *Quotidiana purgatio nostra*, showing how he regarded this striving and supplication for pardon as a work incessantly required, and likewise depending on the exercise of the soul in confession and prayer before God. But what routine are men permitted in the Roman discipline to substitute? I do not say that she teaches so, but that so the mass of human nature will be found to use it. They will make Confession at distant intervals to a priest, discharge the acts of penance which he enjoins, and receive his Absolution. And a Sacramental character has been given to these acts—acts, none of them blameworthy, but the

reverse—acts, however, taken out of their own place in the Roman doctrine.”¹

It must be borne in mind that throughout this passage Mr. Gladstone is dealing with the Roman practice, and not with the Catholic theory, and even with regard to the practice he makes exceptions. He says:—

“The holy men of Romanism have been great lights of Christianity. Penance with them would be a kind of thank-offering—a beseeching God, as it were, to accept their humble and feeble, their sinful and punishable, efforts at self-discipline: Absolution, a comfort which they would receive with trembling; and pain and shame, freely undergone, would co-operate with love to keep them steadfast in their allegiance.”²

His own view is that “our habitual exercise” should be “those inward works of confession and prayer, self-inspection and self-government,” to which “external Confession appears in the main to be properly subsidiary, when employed as a test or verification of that which is inward.”³

In 1841 he wrote, with reference to what are called “scandalous marriages,” and to the revival of discipline:—

“Why should not a man having a small flock, and his churchwardens and persons of influence with him,

¹ “The State in its Relations,” II. p. 73. ² *Ibid.* p. 77.

³ *Ibid.* p. 75.

devise sober rules, with the allowance of his Bishop, for his own people, and introduce them by degrees? May he not require the private Confession and contrition of the parties? Would it be impossible to secure this in a small rural parish by means of persuasion and influence? May we not make a good use of the rubric enjoining or advising Communion after matrimony, in combination with the exhortation to confess before Communion in certain cases?"¹

The following passage, written in 1844, and republished in 1890, may be taken as representing his view of the system enjoined by the Church of England:—

"We ought to remember the Church's solemn admonitions of repentance; her constant witness in favour of holy discipline for the souls of her children; the heavy responsibility in self-examination and self-judgment which she throws upon them; the means of authoritative support, of *consolation ever Divine, though ministered through the weakness and foolishness of a fleshly organ*, to which she habitually points the way as their meet refuge, if they shall not of themselves suffice to the discharge of that awful duty."²

I turn now to another point of Catholic practice round which recent controversy has raged—Prayer for the Departed. On this point Mr. Gladstone's testimony is unequivocal.

¹ "Life of Cardinal Manning," I. p. 198.

² *Merry England*, February, 1890.

(1878) "The strong and just reaction from the Purgatorial system prevailing in the Latin Church of the period (the sixteenth century) went far to account for, and even excuse, that stark and rigid conception of the effect of death on the state of the human being, which led to an abandonment of the uniform practice of the earliest ages of the Church, as testified by the Liturgies, in the commendation of the Faithful Departed to God for an increase of their rest and peace. But what caused—nay, even what might excuse—the violence thus done to Nature as well as to Religion did not frustrate its mischievous effects in narrowing the range of Christian sympathies, and establishing an anomaly in the general doctrine of prayer. With the obscuration of an universal tradition, there came indeed manifold confusions of doctrine; the Final Judgment, with its solemn import, seemed to have no place left for it when the Intermediate State of Souls had been reduced almost to a cipher. Worst of all, the new standard appeared to be in hopeless conflict with the widest experience; for it implied that the entire work of discipline was in every case fully accomplished on this side the grave—that every soul passed away into the unseen in a state of ripeness for a final destiny of bliss or woe."¹

(1896) "The Church has walked in the path opened for it by St. Paul through his prayer² on behalf of Onesiphorus."³

(1873—Of a deceased friend) "I turn now to the

¹ "Gleanings," iii. p. 234.

² The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.—2 Timothy i. 18.

³ "Studies Subsidiary," p. 253.

brighter thought of his present light, and peace, and progress. May they be his more and more abundantly."¹

(1894—To a friend who had lost his father) "May he enjoy the rest, light, and peace of the Just, until you are permitted to rejoin him."

(1882—To a lady who had lost her husband):—

And thou, O mourner, lift thine head,
And see this jewel of thy love,
With earthly soil no more bestead,
And safe for ever stored above.
He suffereth no more, nor dieth,
Nor wandereth now in twilights dim;
In light, and rest, and peace he lieth—
The prayers of millions follow him.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

(1896) "The Christian Dead, then, are in a progressive state; and the appointed office of the interval between Death and Resurrection is reasonably believed to be the corroboration of every good and holy habit, and the effacement of all remains of human infirmity and vice."²

"A process of discipline, happy indeed in its result, but of which we have no right to assert . . . that the redeeming and consummating process will be accomplished without an admixture of salutary and accepted pain."³

RELIGION AND THE WORLD.

(1851) "Away with the servile doctrine that Religion cannot live but by the aid of Parliaments! . . . The

¹ "Memoirs of J. R. Hope-Scott," II. Appendix iii.

² "Studies Subsidiary," p. 253.

³ *Ibid.* p. 254.

security of Religion lies, first in the Providence of God and the promise of Christ: next in the religious character, and strong sentiment of personal duty and responsibility, so deeply graven on this country and its people."¹

(1894) "Foul fall the day when the persons of this world shall, on whatever pretext, take into their uncommissioned hands the manipulation of the Religion of our Lord and Saviour."²

UNDENOMINATIONAL RELIGION.

(1894) "An undenominational system of religion, framed by or under the authority of the State, is a moral monster. The State has no charter from Heaven such as may belong to the Church or to the individual conscience. It would, as I think, be better for the State to limit itself to giving secular instruction, which, of course, is no complete education, than rashly to adventure upon such a system."³

ERASTIANISM.

(1876) "If we follow the Erastian idea, it does not matter what God we worship, or how we worship Him, provided we derive both belief and worship from the civil ruler, or hold them subject to his orders. Many most respectable persons have been, or have thought themselves to be, Erastians; but the system, in the developments of which it is capable, is among the most debased ever known to man."⁴

¹ "Gleanings," vi. p. 8.

² "Later Gleanings," p. 302.

³ The *Daily News*, November 9, 1894.

⁴ "Gleanings," iii. p. 100.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE HUMAN RACE.

(1897) "I write entirely from one defined and immovable point of view. According to my mind, the whole interests of the human race eventually depend upon one question—the question of Belief; as, again, Belief is summed up in Christianity, and Christianity in Christ. He is for us the true Alpha and the true Omega. . . . Every measure and every movement in matters of religion, without any exception, ought to be ultimately tried by its tendency to bring mankind nearer to Christ, or to remove them further from Him."¹

In the extracts which I have read the Evangelical and the Catholic elements in Mr. Gladstone's system of religion have been almost equally conspicuous. Indeed, he wrote in 1879 that the leaders of the Oxford Movement accepted the preceding labours of the Evangelical school as "part of a restoring work which it was their aim to complete,"² and in the fulfilment of which his own heart and will were deeply involved. It remains to enquire if he had any sympathy with the Broad, Liberal, or Latitudinarian school.

For my own part, I seem to find some traces of such sympathy in his high regard for Charles Kingsley, whom he twice promoted; in his vigorous efforts to keep Mr. Maurice at King's College; in his early and persistent confidence in the present Archbishop of Canterbury; in that Essay in which, as Dr. Liddon says in the

¹ "Later Gleanings," p. 396.

² "Gleanings," vii. p. 223.

notes to his Bampton Lectures, "Genius and orthodoxy have done their best for the Christian honour of *Ecce Homo*"; in his disparagement of the Athanasian, as compared with the Nicene, Creed; and in his very lenient judgment on the nature and limits of culpable schism.

But his most conspicuous departure from the rigid traditionalism of his earlier theology was his adoption, in "Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler," of the doctrine which is commonly called Conditional Immortality.

In August, 1895, it was my privilege to spend a week at Hawarden, and, during a great part of the time, to be alone with Mr. Gladstone. He opened his mind to me with a fulness and a frankness which he had never used before. He spoke of his own memories and experiences; of political prospects and political men; of our colleagues in his last Ministry; of the increasing disadvantages of public life; of the natural beauties of the place; and of material improvements, actual and prospective, in the labourer's lot. What he said on these subjects, though well remembered by me, need not now be recalled. But two topics may be commemorated in connexion with the subject of religion. One was that grave branch of social duty which respects our fallen sisters. The other was the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul. (He was then at work on his "Studies Subsidiary.") Never shall I forget the hour when I sat with him in the park at Hawarden, while a

thunderstorm was gathering over our heads, and he, all unheeding, poured forth, in those organ-tones of profound conviction, his belief that the human soul is not necessarily indestructible, but that Immortality is the gift of God in Christ to the believer. The impression of that discourse will not be effaced until the tablets of memory are finally blotted.

I feel that the occasion is not suitable, and that I am not qualified, for an enquiry into the question how far Mr. Gladstone's doctrine on this most solemn of all topics accords with the general sense of the Catholic Church. But, as a disciple jealous for his master's theological honour, I am bound to remind my hearers that, whether successfully or not, he labours most sedulously to bring his theory into accordance with the mind of the Church as exhibited in the Catholic Creeds.

The limits of time do not allow me to enter into such topics as the alteration of Mr. Gladstone's theory about Established Churches ; his dealings with the Law of Marriage and Divorce ; his highly conservative views on the criticism of the Sacred Text. On all these and many similar topics, theological or closely connected with theology, I might have much to say ; but I pass on to matters of more immediate concern.

A word must be said about Ritual. Mr. Gladstone's temperament, which was essentially artistic, gave him a natural taste for Ceremonial ; and he deplored, with characteristic fervour, the want of the æsthetic sense in ordinary Englishmen.

"As in the Italian language, scarcely a word can be found which is not musical, so a 'music of the eye' (I borrow the figure from Wordsworth) should pervade all visible production and construction whatever, whether of objects in themselves permanent, or of those where a temporary collocation only of the parts is in view. This state of things was realized, to a great extent, in the Italian life of the Middle Ages. But its grand and normal example is to be sought in ancient Greece. . . . The law that governed the design of an amphora or a lamp governed also the order of a spectacle, a procession or a ceremonial."¹ On the other hand, "Put Englishmen to march in a procession, and see how, instead of feeling instinctively the music and sympathy of motion, they will loll and stroll and straggle. It never occurs to them that there is beauty or solemnity in ordered movement."²

But, while Mr. Gladstone held thus strongly the value of Beauty in the general scheme of social life, and particularly in that highest part of our life which lifts us nearest to Heaven, he had no special or technical knowledge of religious ritual, and he never regulated his attendance at a church by reference to the amount or kind of ceremonial practised in it. In 1867 he wrote to Bishop Wilberforce:—

"Yesterday I saw, for the first time, the service in a Ritualistic church proper. There was much in it that I did not like, could not defend as good; perhaps could not claim toleration for. *But that must be in the last—the very last—resort.*"³

¹ "Gleanings," vi. p. 112.

² *Ibid.* p. 116.

³ "Life of Bishop Wilberforce," III. p. 208.

In 1874 he wrote of All Saints', Margaret Street, as it had been thirty years before :—

“Mr. Oakley (now, alas! ours no more) and Mr. Upton Richards gave to its very simple services, such as would now scarcely satisfy an average congregation, and where the fabric was truly hideous, that true solemnity which is in perfect accord with simplicity.

Mr. Oakley . . . had then gathered round him a congregation the most devout and hearty that I (for one) have ever seen in any communion of the Christian world.”¹

In the same year he wrote :—

“Ritualism surely means an *undue* disposition to Ritual. Ritual itself is founded on the Apostolic precept, ‘Let all things be done decently and in order’—*εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν*—in right, graceful, or becoming figure, and by fore-ordered arrangement. 1 Cor. xiv. 40. The exterior modes of Divine Service are thus laid down as a distinct and proper subject for the consideration of Christians.”²

“Ritual, then, is the clothing which, in some form and in some degree, men naturally and inevitably give to the performance of the public duties of Religion.”³

“The life and teaching of Christ Himself are marked by frequent employment of signs in which are laid the ground, and the foreshadowing, both of Sacraments and of Ritual.”⁴

He sums up the whole case in words peculiarly applicable to current controversies :—

¹ “Gleanings,” vi. p. 140.

² *Ibid.* p. 109.

³ *Ibid.* p. 110.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 111.

"No ritual is too much, provided it is subsidiary to the inner work of worship; and all ritual is too much, unless it ministers to that purpose."¹

So far, I have spoken almost exclusively of opinion. But conduct, as Matthew Arnold taught us, is three-fourths of human life; and I feel that my hearers have a right to ask, What manner of man was he whose opinions you have unfolded to us at this inordinate length?

In some points you can answer the question for yourselves. Probably you all know something of his incessant diligence; his strong self-mastery; his abiding remembrance of "that solemn account which we must one day give before the judgment-seat of CHRIST"; his scrupulous attention to the public and private offices of devotion; his rigorous reservation of the Sunday for sacred uses.

"Sunday," he wrote in 1845, "is reserved, with rare exceptions, for religious employments; and it was my practice, in general, to receive the Holy Communion weekly. . . . It is Sunday, I am convinced, that has kept me alive and well, even to a marvel, in times of considerable labour."²

And just fifty years later he wrote:—

"What is essential is that to the New Life should belong the flower and vigour of the day. We are born, on each Lord's Day morning, into a new climate, a new

¹ *Ibid.* p. 130.

² "Life of Cardinal Manning," I. p. 436.

atmosphere: and in that atmosphere (so to speak), by the law of a renovated nature, the lungs and heart of the Christian life should spontaneously and continuously drink in the vital air."¹

Few, however, can know his splendid munificence in charity, not haphazard or impulsive, but regulated and disciplined; the alms not *bequeathed*, but *given*, so that the surrender could be *felt*. Be it remembered that he was one of the founders of the first Sisterhood that was ever opened in the Church of England (near the Regent's Park in 1845), and of the House of Mercy at Clewer in 1852. One of his latest acts was to give—not bequeath—£30,000 for St. Deiniol's Library.

None except those who lived close to him can realize the fibre of his religious life, combining the profundity of a Saint with the simplicity of a schoolboy. It was conspicuously marked by method, by discipline, and by a strict dutifulness. When he came home to die he asked for a fresh rule of life; and when, in the extremity of weakness, it was proposed to communicate him with the Reserved Sacrament, he enquired of the clergyman if he was quite satisfied that such a practice was consistent with the Church's order. During the last weeks of his life we all heard—what was perfectly true—that "Rock of Ages" was in his judgment the grandest of hymns, and that "Praise to the Holiest" was constantly on his lips. But let me add a third hymn in which his

¹ "Later Gleanings," p. 347.

innermost heart seemed to utter itself, and which he deemed only too sacred and too intimate for promiscuous use in public worship.

Hark, my soul ! it is the Lord,
'Tis thy Saviour, hear His word :
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee ;
" Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me ?

" I delivered thee when bound,
And when bleeding, heal'd thy wound ;
Sought thee wandering, set thee right,
Turn'd thy darkness into light.

" Can a woman's tender care
Cease towards the child she bare ?
Yes, she may forgetful be ;
Yet will I remember thee !

" Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above,
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.

" Thou shalt see My glory soon,
When the work of grace is done ;
Partner of My throne shalt be,
Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me ? "

Lord ! it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint ;
Yet I love Thee and adore !
Oh ! for grace to love Thee more !

As he had lived, so he died. The Bishop of St. Andrews, who perhaps shared his religious confidence more deeply than any other clergyman, spoke thus in his Funeral Sermon—

"Shall I ever forget one hour a few months ago in the library at Hawarden, which is for ever to me consecrated ground? He had no sympathy with the new ideas by which sin and Satan have been eliminated from our modern enlightenment. He felt that sin was a horrible thing, a cursed thing, that nailed the Son of God to the Cross, that any little sin was an abomination in the sight of God; and I wish that every young man here could have seen him as he weighed his life, not in the balance of earth, but of Heaven, as he reviewed the past and anticipated the future. 'Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness. Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.' He did not know what was meant by the outside idea of sin and goodness. He knew what it was to have the light of God the Holy Ghost shining into his heart. He anticipated what every one of us here will one day learn when the books are opened and the record of life is revealed."

A friend wrote thus on the Friday in Passion Week, 1898:—

"This morning's Eucharist was memorable. At his right, where he could see it, was the picture of Newman. The altar; the crucifix; his rich voice swelling out with that deep devotion in the *Gloria* and in the confession; his determination to get out of bed and kneel for the confession, absolution, and reception—it was not to be forgotten. Then after his breakfast he went to sleep, and is sleeping the sleep of a little child."

Qualis ab incepto. This was all of a piece with what had gone before. The spell by which my great master and leader held me was the sense that, amid all the turmoils and distractions of the most secular and most exciting occupation, his inner life was lived unbrokenly with God. It has been my happiness to know great saints in various communions ; but they have been either Ministers of Religion by profession, or recluses from the world by choice. Here was a man who did his human work, and fought his human battles, with the most scrupulous diligence and the most masterful resolution ; and yet, all the while, was dwelling (to use his own phrase) "in the inner court of the Sanctuary whereof the walls are not built with hands." On the 10th of May, 1898, I knelt by his deathbed, and received his parting benediction. As I turned away, I felt that I had been on the Mount of Transfiguration, and had seen a glimpse of Paradise through the Gates Ajar.

From that deathbed, as most of you remember, he sent his farewell message to this place :—

"There is no expression of Christian sympathy which I value more than that of the God-fearing and God-sustaining University of Oxford. I served her, perhaps mistakenly, but to the best of my ability. My most earnest prayers are hers, to the uttermost and to the last."

My brothers, let those prayers be returned into his own bosom. Let us, as the Apostle bids us,

"Remember our Guides,"¹ and remember them where remembrance is of most avail. With prayer let thanksgiving be mingled, for all that this great son of Oxford was enabled to do for the cause of Christianity in his day and generation. His life illustrated, in the full view of his countrymen and of the world, the lesson which Dr. Liddon taught from the pulpit of St. Mary's, in the first University Sermon which I ever heard—that "the one thing worth thinking of, worth living for, if need were, worth dying for, is the unmutated faith of Jesus our Lord."

If ever we should be tempted to despond about the possibilities of human nature, we shall bethink ourselves of him. If our faith should ever be perplexed by the

Blank misgivings of a Creature,
Moving about in worlds not realized,

the memory of his strong confidence will reassure us. And, if ever we should be told by the flippancy of Scepticism that "Religion is a disease," then we can point to him, who, up to the very verge of ninety years, displayed a fulness of vigorous and manly life, beyond all that we had ever known.

LAUS DEO.

¹ Hebrews xiii. 7.

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